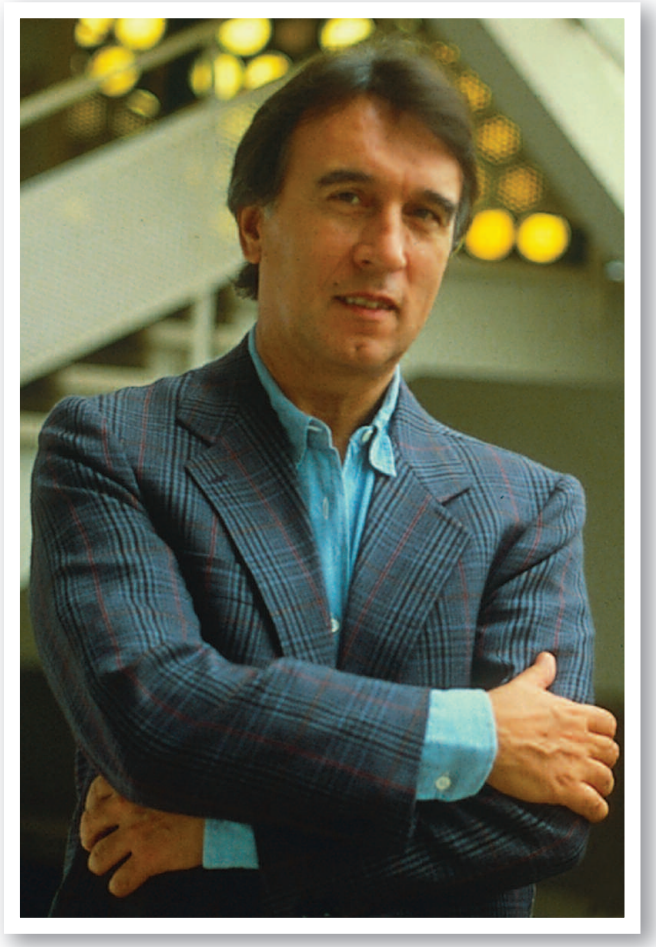
Deutsche Grammophon
RAVEL
Boléro
CLAUDIO ABBADO

Ravel: Boléro

Composer
Maurice Ravel was born in Ciboure in the Basses Pyrénées, France in 1875. He went on to achieve distinction in virtually every genre, but at the height of his powers began suffering the debilitating effects of Pick's Disease and despite cranial surgery died in Paris in 1937. He was a meticulous craftsman, fastidiously creating his exquisite masterpieces and leading Stravinsky to refer to him as a "Swiss Clockmaker". He had a particular affinity with reproducing in music the magic of childhood, the antique, exotic and the Hispanic, the latter due to his Basque ancestry. He was also one of the first mainstream composers to incorporate jazz and blues into his creative style.

Work
Ravel's *Boléro* was originally a short ballet piece, commissioned by the dancer Ida Rubinstein and initially entitled *Fandango*. It was premiered in Paris in 1928, to choreography by Bronislava Nijinska, younger sister of the legendary Nijinsky, with the following scenario, by Rubinstein and Nijinska: "Inside a tavern in Spain, people dance beneath the brass lamp hung from the ceiling. In response to the cheers to join in, the female dancer has leapt onto the long table and her steps become more and more animated." Ravel did not entirely approve of the scenario; his own conception was an outdoor scene in front of a factory whose machinery provides the inflexible rhythm; the factory workers would emerge to dance together, while a story of a bullfighter killed by a jealous rival was played out. In spite of these conceptual differences, the premiere caused a sensation and, to the surprise of the composer, quickly became his most famous composition. Ravel had predicted that most orchestras would refuse to play it and later disparaged it as a "piece for orchestra without music". *Boléro*'s appeal lies in the hypnotic use of two melodies, the second of which has a distinctively Moorish quality, heard relentlessly via myriad instrumental combinations against the persistent accompaniment of a side drum. The only harmonic variety occurs in the striking shift from C major to E major at the climax.



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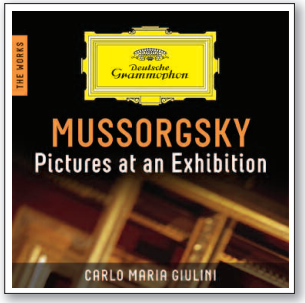
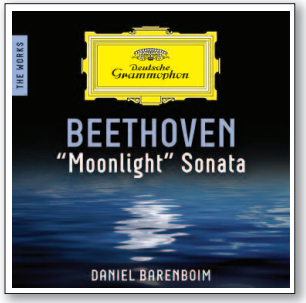
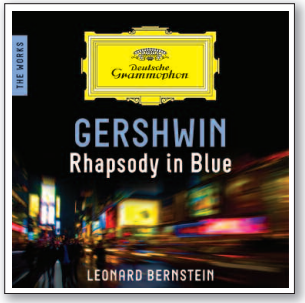
THE **WORKS**

THE WORKS
MOZART
Eine kleine Nachtmusik
ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA


THE WORKS
MUSSORGSKY
Pictures at an Exhibition
CARLO MARIA GIULINI

THE WORKS
BARBER
Adagio
LEONARD BERNSTEIN

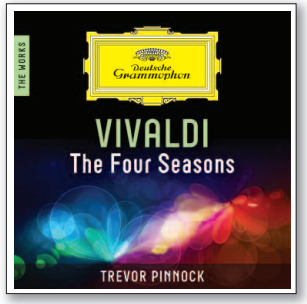

THE WORKS
BEETHOVEN
"Moonlight" Sonata
DANIEL BARENBOIM


THE WORKS
GERSHWIN
Rhapsody in Blue
LEONARD BERNSTEIN

THE WORKS
SMETANA
The Moldau
JAMES LEVINE

THE WORKS
BIZET
Carmen Suite No.1
HERBERT VON KARAJAN

THE WORKS
TALLIS
Spem in alium
THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE


THE WORKS
VIVALDI
The Four Seasons
TREVOR PINNOCK